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CALIFORNIA

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DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (DLANC) Planning and Land Use Committee (PLUC) Development Standards

A. General Direction:

- 1. General Plan Amendments and Zone Changes:** *Work within the current Community Plan(s) land use and zoning constraints:* General Plan Amendments and Zoning designation changes are not encouraged. Any request for an amendment or a zone change should be reviewed to determine alternatives that conform to existing land use and zoning law, and enhance the existing neighborhood and/or other community benefits and amenities.
- 2. Variances:** *Work within the current Community Plan(s) land use and zoning constraints:* Variances are considered carefully and recommended only if they are minor, for very good reasons and if the project goes above and beyond to provide extraordinary public amenities. The PLUC will consider variances under existing City code, which states that “The purpose of the variance is to make the property in question equal to the surrounding properties and not to grant special privilege or permit a use that is inconsistent with other nearby properties”.
- 3. Precedents:** *Recognize the lasting impact of any variance:* Precedents will be set by any variances supported by the PLUC because of the long-term effect of variances becoming the rule for all nearby properties. It is very difficult for the City, the City Attorney, or a Judge to deny a zoning variance once similar variances have been granted to an adjacent property.
- 4. Historic Preservation:** *Promote the cultural, historical, and architectural history of the Downtown Los Angeles Community in the development process:* Developers of sites containing buildings older than 50 years, should, as part of the presentation to the PBC, show the existing buildings and describe intended demolition and/or restoration plans. The PBC encourages the preservation of potentially historic properties when considering a proposed development in order to encourage the revitalization of existing neighborhoods, the preservation of neighborhood character, and the retention of affordable housing.
- 5. Public Presentations:** *Developers are encouraged to engage DLANC’s PLUC to initiate a dialogue with the community and enhance the overall outcome of their project:* All development projects are within a larger community context and are not isolated. Therefore, all proposals should show the context of their project on their drawings, including what is next door and across the street. Proposals are encouraged to demonstrate the reality of the project through plans, sections, elevations, models, and 3-D renderings. Additionally, project proponents should provide a report with all pertinent information regarding their project to the Committee and Neighborhood Council prior to approval by the City Council, including documentation of the project’s Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

B. Development Standards:

- 1. LEED Certification:** All projects that seek and meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or comparable standards.

END

2. *LID*: All projects should seek to manage on-site stormwater run-off through Low Impact Development (LID) techniques and best management practices.
3. *Affordability*: All residential projects with multiple units should provide an affordability component with a ratio of market rate, workforce, and affordable housing units.
4. *Building Heights*: The Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council area is the prime location for increased residential density for the entire region. The PLUC encourages the densification of arterials and transit oriented districts (one half mile radius from major transit stops), the gradual increase of height limits into these areas, and the protection of lower density neighborhoods.
5. *Fence and Wall Heights*: Ensure legal wall and fence heights. Discourage chain link fences and concrete block walls for front yards. Encourage landscaping near and vines on walls as an additional screening technique. Murals should also be encouraged along long, blank walls of a project.
6. *Landscaping Requirements*: The PLUC requires the review of the final landscape plans and details submitted to comply with the LA Landscape Ordinance and Guidelines. It is critical to ensure proper planter depth, drainage, soil mix, irrigation, plant materials, etc. The PLUC encourages the use of California native plants and drought resistant plants.
7. *Anti-Graffiti Measures*: Encourage appropriate ivies and wall vines for the first 10 feet of exterior walls in order to minimize graffiti. In the event that ivy is not consistent with the architectural design, an alternative anti-graffiti prevention material shall be utilized.
8. *Security*: The PLUC requires that all projects include a description of security measures that will be installed to protect the project and the immediate vicinity of the neighborhood. The implementations of defensible space measures (windows to the street, adequate lighting, articulation of the building mass, and clearly defined private and public spaces) are encouraged.
9. *Green Streets*: The PLUC supports and encourages all projects to comply with the City's new Design and Streetscape Guidelines for downtown Los Angeles. The reduction of impervious surfaces in the neighborhood is a primary goal. Where feasible, infrastructure should be upgraded to reduce urban run-off through the use of bio-swales and stormwater retention basins that maximize groundwater recharge.
10. *Complete Streets*: The PLUC supports and encourages all projects to comply with the City's new Design and Streetscape Guidelines for all projects in downtown Los Angeles. The PBC promotes walkability through the provision of adequate sidewalks and other multi-modal infrastructure. All streets and sidewalks should meet ADA requirements and are encouraged to meet the universal needs of the population (i.e. the elderly, disabled, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and buses as well as motorists).
11. *Street Trees*: The PLUC requires all new developments and redevelopments to plant street trees in every space feasible. Trees are recognized as public amenities that provide shade in the summer, reduce stormwater run-off, process carbon emissions, and release oxygen. Developers should maintain the trees for at least the first year after construction.
12. *Street Lights*: Infill missing street lights. Consider Historic Street lights where appropriate, and match street light choice and design to the existing neighborhood context. Street lights should be installed and upgraded to reduce light pollution and increase energy efficiency by using LED lights where feasible.
13. *Street Frontage and Activation*: All street frontage should be activated with retail or entertainment uses, social services, or other public amenities. Outdoor eating areas are encouraged where feasible. Where feasible, these uses should be encouraged to stay open into the night to help activate the nighttime street life of Downtown Los Angeles.

14. *Encourage Maximum Parking Limits:* Parking for all new development proposals should encourage a balance between adequate parking for tenants, visitors, and clients and reducing automobile dependence. Projects are encouraged to reduce parking requirements by coordinating development with public transportation and other alternate modes of transportation (i.e. walking and biking infrastructure and amenities). The use of Shared Parking should be utilized as a technique to reduce parking spaces throughout downtown.
15. *Off Street Loading:* Ensure adequate off-street loading for all projects in order to discourage dangerous on-street and double parking loading that blocks traffic.
16. *Avoid Exposed Garage Ground Floor Parking:* Projects containing surface parking should be screened from the sidewalk and well lit. Projects should have attractive human scale pedestrian entrances with the parking screened behind display windows, shops, housing units, landscaping, etc. The Committee encourages parking to be located behind and/or underground the building fronting the street.
17. *Bus Turn-outs:* The PBC encourages that all developers not only dedicate, but construct bus bays or turnouts when feasible.
18. *Mitigation Measures:* No project will be considered until after the appropriate Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been conducted and the project has addressed the EIR's recommended mitigation measures. All projects with mitigation measures should follow through on their implementation before, during, and after the construction of the structure in compliance with their EIR.
19. *Committee Review:* The PLUC shall review all pertinent documents related to a given project, develop a report based on the criteria established in accordance with the Development Standards and the Guiding Principles, and put forth a recommendation to the DLANC Board of Directors. If there is a time constraint on recommended approval or denial of any project between the PLUC Committee meeting, the DLANC Board of Directors meeting, and action by the City Council, the PLUC will be allowed to provide their written recommendation to City Council for review prior to a vote by the Governing Board.

C. PLUC Expectations:

In general, the PLUC encourages the development of a supportive relationship with each developer and/or project proponent. A "good" developer or project proponent shows the following understanding:

- 1) He or she understands that they are a member of the community who should want their proposed project to be consistent and harmonious with the community's development and needs.
- 2) Any new project should meet all required City planning standards, and ask for Zoning Code and Land Use deviations only when necessary. Projects with multiple Code deviations in parking, height, setbacks, use or hours of operation should be reviewed with an extra level of scrutiny to ensure compatibility with the downtown Los Angeles community.
- 3) The new project should have as many "quality" features as possible, such as additional landscaping, local hiring agreements, affordable housing, and other public amenities.
- 4) The need to meet with the local Neighborhood Council and any other key stakeholders in the community to solicit early community comments and possible mitigation measures or design changes that would make the project more compatible with the Downtown Los Angeles neighborhood.
- 5) The need to be open, honest, accessible to the community, and to share information that the community needs to effectively participate in the planning process.
- 6) The need to be trustworthy in implementing all the City conditions of an approved project and in managing the new use so it is a positive asset to the community without graffiti, loitering, poorly

maintained landscape, etc. A good developer commits his or her reputation on every project they do and the more they follow these guidelines for appropriate quality development, the better their development projects are and the better they will be perceived in the community.